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The Jewish Response to Missionaries

Counter-Missionary Handbook

Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz

Jews for Judaism

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Fourth Edition. Revised.

This revised edition of
The Jewish Response to Missionaries
Counter-Missionary Handbook
is dedicated
in blessed memory of our dear friend

Donna Sudarsky ז"ל

May the individuals she continues to touch through this book discover the beauty and hidden treasures of the Judaism she cherished.

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FOREWORD

For many years I have been familiar with the fine international organization, Jews for Judaism. Its founder and West Coast director, Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz, has worked arduously within the Jewish community to offer counseling services and educational material to counter the arguments of missionary claims. The work of Jews for Judaism has had a major impact in disseminating the truths embodied in Jewish tradition.

As a scholar of the history of Christianity and comparative religion, I can affirm that Rabbi Kravitz is quite correct: Many forms of evangelical Christianity target Jews for conversion and, in some cases, use questionable tactics to do so. As a teacher of religious studies, theology, and ethics at Stanford, Princeton, the University of California, and a number of other universities, I have dealt first-hand with the theological issues of messianism, salvation, vicarious atonement and the like.

Needless to say, these questions, raised among Jewish students both in the lecture halls and outside of class, can be very challenging. In fact, one of the greatest issues impacting the Jewish collegiate today is the threat of manipulative and deceptive missionary practices.

From a scholar's perspective, one of the most dangerous and confusing of these tactics is the way missionaries use the Hebrew Bible. This is, to be sure, nothing new. As many scholars have demonstrated, Christian groups from the beginning re-interpreted the Hebrew Bible in order to support their claims that Christianity superseded Judaism. But this is not the Jewish perspective and not even the claim of all Christians.

Today, many Christians are re-examining the roots of their religion and, with dismay, recognizing the anti-Jewish sentiments at its core. Many Christians are also approaching Judaism with an open mind, learning to appreciate the unique truths of Judaism's Torah and rabbinic tradition. However, the evangelical missionaries who target Jews remain unaware of, or actively resist, the deeper

historical understanding of Christianity. These groups, that spread confusion among our young people, should be the object of our concern.

Jews need to become familiar with the issues these groups raise and effective ways to respond to them. The Jewish Response to Missionaries is an excellent handbook for individuals, Jew or Gentile, who are perplexed by the issues raised by Biblical proof-texts and theological debates involving the basic difference between Judaism and Christianity. Whether you are a rabbi, academician, student, or concerned parent, I highly recommend you read and share this booklet.

Shalom,

Dr. Tamar Frankiel
Lecturer in Religious Studies
University of California, Riverside

JEWS FOR JUDAISM
THE RESPONSE TO AN URGENT NEED

On ABC's award-winning news program, *20/20*, Barbara Walters recently asked, *"What if your 12-year-old came home and said an adult had persuaded him to change his religion?"* This question introduced the story of a boy who was coerced into conversion three months shy of his Bar Mitzvah. His conversion took place during a youth program held in a Southern Baptist church. The church member who spoke to this boy told him that he could be "Jewish and Christian at the same time." The report made clear that a serious threat to the Jewish community has taken on new proportions.

According to recent Gallup and Harris polls, there are over 70 million "born again" Christians in North America, many of whom are convinced that in order for Jesus to return, the Jewish people must first be converted to Christianity. Christian denominations such as the Southern Baptist Convention – which passed a resolution in 1996 targeting Jews for conversion – and the Assemblies of G-d, as well as countless other Christian groups worldwide, contribute more than $250 million annually to aggressively evangelize Jews. These evangelical Christians have established special "Hebrew Christian synagogues" to attract Jews. Such "synagogues" have grown in number from 20 to over 400 in the last twenty years.

Missionaries convince their recruits that they are not complete as Jews until they accept Jesus as the Messiah, and that a Jew retains his or her Jewish identity after converting to Christianity. According to a 1990 Council of Jewish Federations population study, over 600,000 Jews in North America alone identify with some type of Christianity. Over the past 25 years, more than 275,000 Jews worldwide have been converted specifically by missionaries who use deceptive tactics that masquerade Christian beliefs in the guise of Judaism. The Gospel is preached by "Messianic rabbis" wearing yarmulkas (skullcaps) and talleisim (prayer shawls) at "Shabbat" and "High Holiday" services. These "Hebrew Christians" promote their Christian faith by using a new name: "Messianic Judaism."

These groups have influenced evangelical churches to adopt the

same deceptive techniques. For the first time in history, Jews are welcomed into the church and told that they can retain their Jewish identity. Church members then introduce the Jew to "someone Jewish who has accepted the Lord." This method of proselytizing increases the number of contact people, who serve as conduits to the "Hebrew Christian" missionaries, to include Christian associates at work, at school and in social settings. In addition, new programs such as the $16-million theme park in Orlando, Florida, called The Holy Land Experience, and traveling conferences like "To the Jew First in the New Millennium" are virtual training grounds to teach Christians how to effectively evangelize their Jewish acquaintances.

Contrary to popular perception, it is not only emotionally unstable Jews who fall prey to the missionaries' efforts; in fact, all Jews are susceptible. Missionaries often target college campuses, hospitals, drug rehabilitation programs, seniors' residences, and shopping malls in Jewish neighborhoods, as well as the Israeli community, Soviet immigrants and intermarried couples. They deliberately misquote, mistranslate and misinterpret Jewish scriptures and rabbinical texts in an attempt to "prove" that Jesus was both the Jewish Messiah and G-d. Their delegitimization of Judaism, in concert with their misleading exploitation of Jewish symbols, religious artifacts and even traditional music, serve to confuse the potential convert, making him or her more vulnerable.

These missionary groups – over 900 in North America alone – are active worldwide, and can be found in almost every Jewish population center. Several governing bodies in this movement have considerable political clout; one has even been granted "observer" status at the United Nations. Several groups have founded "Messianic Jewish" day schools for children and "yeshivot" where they produce ordained "Messianic rabbis." There are over 100 "Messianic congregations" in Israel, and over 38 in the former Soviet Union. These groups prey almost exclusively upon uneducated, unaffiliated and alienated Jews.

In response to this ever-growing threat, **Jews for Judaism** International was established in 1986. The only worldwide counter-missionary resource and outreach network, **Jews for Judaism** has branches in Los Angeles; New York; Baltimore; Washington, D.C.; Toronto; Johannesburg, South Africa; and Melbourne, Australia. Its two primary goals are preventive education and winning back those Jews who have been influenced by missionaries.

Jews for Judaism achieves these goals through counseling "Hebrew Christians," monitoring missionary activity and offering a speakers' bureau and intensive counter-missionary courses. **Jews for Judaism** is also a pioneer in the use of multi-media advertising and the worldwide distribution of counter-missionary materials. We have produced a wide selection of literature and audio and video tapes, available in English, Russian and closed-caption for the hearing impaired. Additionally, we have a highly-acclaimed website at www.jewsforjudaism.org.

The best antidote to "Hebrew Christian" missionaries and cults is an educated and committed Jewish community. **Jews for Judaism** offers several programs outlining the nature and extent of the efforts to convert Jews, and explaining how to counteract them. These courses foster an awareness of missionary techniques, including fallacies and deceptions used by missionary groups who misrepresent Judaism.

Jews are often confused and intimidated by missionaries. It is important that we understand the theological flaws in the "Hebrew Christian" argument that accepting Jesus is a fulfillment of Judaism. While most Jews know that we do not accept Jesus as Messiah or G-d, few are able to explain why.

To this end, **Jews for Judaism** also provides campus outreach, outreach to Russian Jews, and outreach to "Hebrew Christians." Voluntary counseling is available to those who have become involved in a "Hebrew Christian" group. Based upon the premise that the individual did not have enough information at the time to make an informed decision, he or she is presented with the Jewish arguments to counter the Christian perspective. Several of our branches have developed support groups, offering understanding and encouragement to individuals and families touched by missionaries and cults.

How successful is **Jews for Judaism**? There is a 60 to 70% chance that any Jewish person who is considering converting to Christianity, or already has converted, will return to Judaism if they are willing to listen to the Jewish point of view. Most of these individuals leave our counseling with a renewed pride in and vital appreciation of their Jewish heritage.

THE OBSESSION TO CONVERT JEWS

Over the past decade there has been an alarming increase in the influence of evangelical Christianity. This growth has been accompanied by an astonishing increase in Christian missionary activities which target Jews for conversion. The annual budget for one such missionary group, “Jews for Jesus,” is over $12 million. Well over 1,000 missionary groups, which actively work to convert Jews worldwide, spend over $250 million each year on their efforts. They sponsor hundreds of full-time missionaries, as well as television and radio programs, and have created over 400 “Messianic synagogues,” which strive to appear Jewish but are, in fact, Christian.

MISSIONARY CONVERSION TACTICS

These groups use three deceptive tactics to attract Jews. Firstly, they imply that a Jew can retain his Judaism even after converting. Secondly, they frequently misquote, mistranslate and misrepresent Jewish scripture and rabbinical texts in order to substantiate their claims. Thirdly, they attempt to delegitimize Judaism by claiming that Christianity is the only spiritual path to G-d and to salvation.

In addition, many missionary groups employ scare tactics and intimidation to discourage individuals from talking with rabbis, thereby preventing them from having an opportunity to hear an opposing viewpoint.

Such deceptive tactics are morally objectionable to Jews and non-Jews alike. Among the numerous Christian groups which have publicly condemned the “Hebrew Christian” movements are: The Episcopal Bishops of Maryland; The Archdiocese of Harrisburg, PA; The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington D.C.; The Campus Ministry Board at American University in Washington, D.C.; The National Conference of Christians and Jews (Southern California Region); and The Interfaith Conference of Washington, D.C. (a group that includes the Roman Catholic Archdiocese as well as Baptist and mainline Protestant groups).

THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite such widespread condemnation, the efforts of the "Hebrew Christians" have met with alarming success. According to the Christian magazine *Charisma*, "More Jews have accepted Jesus as their Messiah in the past 19 years than in the past 19 centuries.*" Most authorities say that there are over 275,000 Jewish converts to "Hebrew Christianity" worldwide.

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 37a) teaches that "Whoever saves a single Jewish soul is as if he saved an entire world." This passage underscores the importance of helping each individual. Even if only one Jewish person were being misled, our concern would be great. When you multiply this by hundreds of thousands, the anguish and concern is far more pronounced.

"TO THE JEW FIRST"

Most people have heard of the missionary group "Jews for Jesus." Yet there is no "Buddhists for Jesus" or "Hindus for Jesus." Apparently, Christian evangelicals are more obsessed with converting Jews than converting any other group. There are both theological and psychological reasons to explain this historical obsession.

THE THEOLOGICAL OBSESSION

The Christian gospel is described as being "*to the Jew first and also to the Greek [gentile]*" (Romans 1:16). Fundamentalist evangelical Christians interpret this to mean that they have a mandate to convert every person, but especially Jews.

Many fundamentalist Christians believe that the Jews are the key to bringing about the "Second Coming" of Jesus and salvation to all of mankind. To prove their point, they quote the passages, "*Salvation is from the Jews*" (John 4:22) and "*You will not see me until you [the Jews] say, 'Blessed is he [Jesus] that comes in the name of the Lord'*" (Matthew 23:39).

Some believe that Jesus' return is dependent upon the conversion of exactly 144,000 Jews (based upon the seventh chapter of

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* This statement does not include forced conversions, carried out under duress, such as those of the Marranos during the Spanish Inquisition.

Revelation) and that the rest of the Jews will be wiped out during the great tribulation that will accompany the return of Jesus. In the words of Richard Yao, a non-Jewish former fundamentalist:

> "*The disturbing thing about all this is that millions of people in this country are getting used to the idea that it's okay for millions and millions of people [Jews] to die in this terrible holocaust [tribulation], because that's a requirement for Jesus to return. I think that's very, very scary.*"

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL OBSESSION

Since the concept of a Messiah was originally and exclusively a Jewish concept, the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah by the Jews has always posed a serious paradox and dilemma for the Christian Church. Therefore, in the eyes of many evangelical fundamentalists, each conversion of a Jew to Christianity becomes a corroboration of their faith.

For centuries, the response to the Jewish rejection of Jesus has been persecution of Jews rationalized as G-d's divine punishment for having rejected Jesus. The fire of prejudice was fueled by New Testament passages such as:

> "*You [Jews] are of your father the devil.*" (John 8:44)

> "*The Jews who killed both Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, they are not pleasing to G-d.*" (I Thessalonians 2:15)

> "*All the people [Jews] answered and said, his blood be upon us and on our children.*" (Matthew 27:25)

Most fundamentalists will argue that the perpetrators of the history of atrocities against the Jews were not "true" Christians. However, according to many historians, it is precisely such New Testament rhetoric that is responsible for creating the atmosphere in which such events could transpire.*

Today, after almost 2,000 years of Jewish rejection of Jesus, the dilemma still exists. It is out of this tremendous theological and psychological need that the fundamentalist Christians have committed millions of dollars to develop new, sophisticated and often deceptive techniques to convert Jews.

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* For an in-depth analysis of this idea, please see the book *The Roots of Christian Anti-Semitism* recommended in the Suggested Reading list.



Some of the "training manuals" used to teach Christians how to target Jews for conversion. Note the blatant use of Jewish symbols and themes.

"HEBREW CHRISTIANS": BIBLICAL PARADOX OR RELIGIOUS REALITY

Many individuals are confused by the arguments of the "Hebrew Christians" and are unaware of the Jewish response to the "Hebrew Christians' " claims that:

1) Jews can retain their Jewish identity once they convert.
2) The Jewish Bible is full of prophetic references to Jesus.
3) Spiritual salvation and a personal relationship with G-d can only come through Jesus.
4) Miracles "prove" the validity of Christianity.
5) The Christian belief in the Trinity of G-d is compatible with Judaism.

It is our hope that by examining each claim and the corresponding Jewish response, Judaism's position will be clearly understood.

CLAIM # 1:

"JEWS CAN RETAIN THEIR JEWISH IDENTITY ONCE THEY CONVERT"

In their attempt to convert Jews, missionaries claim that one can remain Jewish while practicing Christianity. The use of terminology such as "Messianic Jew," "Hebrew Christian," and "Jew for Jesus" is but a deceptive attempt to represent converted Jews as Jewish.* In fact, missionaries even go so far as to claim that a Jew who accepts Jesus (or "Yeshua," as they call him) is a "completed Jew," implying of course that all other Jews are incomplete.

The misrepresentation and deception employed in this attempt to disguise the seriousness of a Jew's conversion to Christianity is

* Missionary training manuals (see pg 16) encourage use of the expressions "believer" rather than "Christian;" "Messiah" instead of "Christ;" "tree" instead of "cross;" and "New Covenant" instead of "New Testament," to promote a more Jewish-sounding message.

similarly reflected in the widespread misuse of Jewish symbols and customs, in the fabrication of Jewish texts, and in the misrepresentation of the background and Jewish education of many "Hebrew Christians." Numerous "Hebrew Christian" leaders dishonestly refer to themselves as "rabbis" and to their places of worship as "synagogues."*

These tactics are employed in an attempt to render their version of Christianity more palatable to the Jews they seek to convert. However, in the words of one of the numerous Christian groups which condemn "Hebrew Christianity," "*These proselytizing techniques are tantamount to coerced conversions and should be condemned.*" (From a formally adopted statement issued by the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington, D.C.)

◆ THE JEWISH RESPONSE ◆

The fact remains that, regardless of superficial attempts to sound Jewish, the term "Hebrew Christian," or "Jew for Jesus," is an oxymoron and a theological contradiction.

So-called "Hebrew Christians" argue that a person who is born Jewish can never lose his birthright or heritage. However, the Bible teaches that your beliefs do influence your Jewish status and that a person who was born a Jew can at some point temporarily cease to be called a Jew.

In the Book of Kings, Elijah the prophet is sent to rebuke those Jews who were worshiping a foreign god called Baal. In I Kings 18:21, Elijah says to them, "*How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is G-d, follow Him: but if Baal, follow him.*" In other words, you are either a Jew or a worshiper of Baal; you can't be both. The story concludes with the Jews renouncing their idolatrous ways and returning to Judaism.

From this, we derive an important lesson. A Jew who follows another religion is Jewish only to the point that he retains a spiritual obligation to repent and to return to Judaism. However, as long as

* In their attempt to justify their Jewishness, certain "Hebrew Christians" have labeled Rabbinic Judaism a cult since they claim that it "follows the words of men rather than G-d." Besides being false, this statement is also hypocritical since "Hebrew Christians" use these very same rabbinic traditions to lend their practices a guise of Jewishness.

his beliefs are idolatrous and foreign to Judaism, he cannot call himself a Jew. (It is important to note that a non-practicing Jew is different from a Jew who has chosen to follow a foreign path.)

The Torah teaches that Jews and non-Jews are given different paths to reach G-d. A Jew is obligated to follow the Torah, while a non-Jew must observe the Seven Laws of the Children of Noah.* One group isn't better than the other, merely different. Therefore, certain beliefs and practices, like eating pork, are permissible for non-Jews but not for Jews. Similarly, the majority of Christian beliefs concerning G-d, salvation and the Messiah do not violate the Noahide covenant for non-Jews, but are absolutely forbidden for Jews. That is why the term "Messianic Jew," "Hebrew Christian," or "Jew for Jesus," is a contradiction.

CLAIM # 2

"THE JEWISH BIBLE IS FULL OF PROPHETIC REFERENCES TO JESUS"

"Hebrew Christians" believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and they attempt to prove this by quoting various passages from the Jewish Bible. Such quotations may sound impressive, overwhelming and confusing to anyone with only a passing knowledge of Judaism and with no command of the Hebrew language.

◆ THE JEWISH RESPONSE ◆

1) The only reason these passages, or so-called "proof texts," appear to be alluding to Jesus is because they have been misquoted, mistranslated, or taken out of context. Any written work, if mistranslated or taken out of context, can be made to suggest meanings which were never intended, as the following examples will clearly demonstrate.

The New Testament is no exception. For example, in the New Testament, (Luke 14:26) Jesus is quoted as saying:

*"If anyone comes to me, and does not **hate** his own father and*

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* For a more detailed explanation of the Seven Universal Laws of the Children of Noah, see *The Path of the Righteous Gentile* in the Suggested Reading list.

mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

An initial reading of this verse gives the impression that one must hate one's family, and even oneself, as a prerequisite to being a Christian. However, any Christian confronted with a literal reading of this passage will react defensively and insist that the verse doesn't mean that at all. It only appears that way, he or she will explain, because it is being read out of context and without a proper translation.

This is precisely the point we would like to make. What a verse says and what it means may be completely different. Before one can understand any verse properly, whether from the Jewish Scriptures or from the New Testament, it must be read in context and with an accurate translation.

Similarly, when a missionary quotes a verse from Jewish Scriptures, one should ascertain that the verse is being rendered correctly. For example, Psalm 22:17 from the Hebrew Bible, when correctly translated, reads "*They surrounded my hands and feet* ***like a lion*****,*" referring to King David being pursued by his enemies, who are often referred to as a lion (as in Psalms 7 and 17). Yet, when read out of context and mistranslated as "*They* ***pierced*** *my hands and feet*," as appears in Christian versions (Psalm 22:16), the passage intentionally conjures up thoughts of Jesus.

This example demonstrates only one of the many verses that the missionaries twist and mistranslate to suit their purposes. Judaism has a response and an explanation for each such instance. The rule of thumb is to always ask: "Are these verses being read in context and with an accurate translation?" Sadly, most "Hebrew Christians" blindly accept the Christian interpretation without ever having heard or fully understood the Jewish view.

After an open-minded re-examination of both sides, thousands of "Hebrew Christians" have returned to Judaism.

2) Missionaries often use the New Testament as proof that events or prophecies in their mistranslated passages have been fulfilled. However, to someone familiar with the Jewish Bible, it is

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* The word "ka'ari–כארי" clearly means like a lion, as evident from its use in Isaiah 38:13.

obvious that the touted “inerrancy” (i.e., lack of error) of the New Testament is highly questionable. Consider the following examples:

a) In three different places in the Jewish Bible, (Genesis 46:27, Exodus 1:5 and Deuteronomy 10:22,) it is stated that the patriarch Jacob came to Egypt with a total of 70 persons. Acts 7:14 in the New Testament incorrectly gives this number as 75.

b) Hebrews 8:8-13 of the New Testament, when quoting from Jeremiah, states that G-d replaced His Covenant with the Jews with a “*New Covenant*,” claiming that, because the Jews did not keep the “*Old Covenant*,” G-d “*no longer cared for them.*” However, the original Hebrew text in Jeremiah 31:30 of the Jewish Bible does not say that G-d did not care for them, but rather that He “*remained a husband to them.*” Some Christians interpret their translation (in Jeremiah 31:31) to mean that G-d broke His Covenant and rejected the Jewish people. This is completely inconsistent with the biblical stance that the commandments are forever (Psalm 119:151-152) and that G-d promised to never reject or break His Covenant* with the Jews (Judges 2:1 and Leviticus 26:44-45).

c) Hebrews 10:5 of the New Testament, when quoting Psalm 40, claims that G-d replaced animal sacrifices with the death of the Messiah, by stating that, “*sacrifices and offerings You have not desired, but a **body** You have prepared for Me.*” However, the original quote from Psalm 40:6 does not say this; it says, “*sacrifices and meal offerings You have not desired; My **ears** You have opened.*” This refers to G-d’s desire that we listen to Him, as it says, “*Behold! – to obey is better than sacrifice.*” (I Samuel 15:22)

Fundamentalist Christians readily accept the Jewish Scriptures as the inspired and “inerrant” word of G-d and as the foundation for the New Testament. If they were to be logically consistent, it would follow that, wherever the “Old” and “New” Testaments contradict each other, the New Testament must be admitted to be obviously the one which is in error.

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* The Torah, G-d’s original Covenant, is eternal and the Jewish people are obligated to keep it. Free will enables them to choose between observing or not observing the Torah. The “New Covenant” that Jeremiah speaks of does not replace the original, but strengthens it. In the Messianic age, G-d will give us a “new heart,” thereby removing our temptation to do evil. From this point on, the Jewish people will serve G-d with all their heart and will never again break the original Covenant. (Jeremiah 32:38-40, Ezekiel 11:9-20, Ezekiel 36:26-27)

CLAIM # 3

"SPIRITUAL SALVATION AND A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH G-D CAN ONLY COME THROUGH JESUS"

Missionaries claim that "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of G-d*" (Romans 2:23), and that there is no salvation from sin or any possibility of a personal relationship with G-d without belief in Jesus. Specifically with regard to Jews, their argument is that Jews have always needed animal blood sacrifices to rid themselves of sin. Since sacrifices were abolished after the destruction of the Temple in Israel, they claim that today Jews can find salvation from sin only by believing in Jesus, who "died on the cross and shed his blood as the final sacrifice."

◆ *THE JEWISH RESPONSE* ◆

The notion that we are born condemned, and that without the practice of animal sacrifices Jews cannot atone for their sins, represents a blatant misinterpretation of the Jewish Bible.

First of all, the Bible teaches that sin is an act, not a state of being. Mankind was created with an inclination to do evil (Genesis 8:21), and the ability to master this inclination (Genesis 4:7) and choose good over evil (Psalm 37:27). Second, G-d gave us a way to remove our sins. When sacrifices were required they were intended only for unintentional sins (Leviticus 4:1) and served as a means of motivating individuals to true repentance. Numerous passages, including Hosea 14, I Kings 8:44-52 and Jeremiah 29:12-14, inform us that today, without a Temple or sacrifices, our prayers take the place of sacrifices. In addition, we read, "*The sacrifices of G-d are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart*" (Psalm 51:22) and "*I desire kindness and not sacrifices, the knowledge of G-d more than burnt offerings*" (Hosea 6:6). The Torah teaches that through repentance, prayer, fasting, and doing what is right, everyone has the ability to return to G-d directly.

This concept is beautifully illustrated in the books of Jonah and Esther, where both Jews and non-Jews repented, prayed to G-d and were forgiven for their sins without having offered any sacrifices.

Missionaries often misinterpret the Jewish tradition that "the suffering of the righteous is a form of atonement." Jewish sources are clear that this concept pertains only to the alleviation of Divine punishment that was decreed upon the Jewish people as a whole. It does not pertain to the removal of an individual's sin. Every person has the responsibility to repent directly to G-d for his own transgressions. (Ezekiel 18:20)

The Hebrew word for repentance is teshuvah–תשובה, and literally means to "return to G-d." Our personal relationship with G-d allows us to turn directly to Him at any time, as it says in Malachi 3:7, "*Return to Me and I shall return to you,*" and in Ezekiel 18:27, "W*hen the wicked man turns away from his wickedness that he has committed, and does that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive*." Additionally, G-d is extremely compassionate and forgiving as is indicated in Daniel 9:18, "*We do not present our supplications before You because of our righteousness, but because of Your abundant mercy.*"

Contrary to the New Testament (Romans 4:15-16) portrayal of the commandments as a curse and stumbling block, King David says in Psalm 19:7 that "*the Law of G-d is perfect, restoring the soul*."

King Solomon said that the main purpose of humanity is to believe in G-d and keep his commandments as is stated in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "*The end of the matter, when all is said and done: Be in awe of G-d and keep his commandments, for that is the whole person*."

Deuteronomy 30:11-14 teaches that this path to G-d is unquestionably within our grasp. Isaiah 42:6 teaches that it is the role of *Judaism* and the Jewish nation to show the world this path by serving as a "light to the nations."

CLAIM # 4

"MIRACLES PROVE THE VALIDITY OF CHRISTIANITY"

Some "Hebrew Christians" argue that turning to Jesus changed their lives and that, as a direct result, they have even experienced miracles.

Claims of miracles and of changes in one's life are not unique to any one religion. Converts to cults and to other religions also relate miraculous experiences and events in their lives. The Jewish Bible warns that supposed "miracles" may, in reality, be a test from G-d. A classic example of this is found in the beginning of Chapter 13 of the book of Deuteronomy:

> *"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises and gives you a sign or wonder [miracle], and the sign or wonder comes true, saying, 'Let us go after other gods whom you have not known and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your G-d is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall follow the Lord your G-d and fear Him; and listen to His voice, and serve Him, and cling to Him. But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death because he has counseled rebellion against the Lord your G-d."* (Deuteronomy 13:1-6)

These verses teach us that G-d may allow a false prophet to perform miracles in order to test us to see whether we will follow His will or be misled by so-called miraculous occurrences.

We also see, from Exodus 7:11, that miracles do not necessarily have to be attributed to G-d. In this passage, Pharaoh commands his court magicians to imitate, with their magic, the miracles that Moses and Aaron performed.

These two examples illustrate that we cannot rely upon miracles as proof that our beliefs are true.

CLAIM # 5

"CHRISTIAN BELIEF IN THE TRINITY OF G-D IS COMPATIBLE WITH JUDAISM"

The foundation of Christian theology includes belief in the bodily incarnation of G-d, that G-d exists as a Trinity, and that Jesus was a mediator between G-d and man. "Hebrew Christian" missionaries claim that this theology is totally compatible with Judaism.

◆ THE JEWISH RESPONSE ◆

As stated earlier, Judaism maintains that certain beliefs may be permissible for non-Jews, but not for Jews. The Christian theology concerning G-d is one example of a belief that is absolutely forbidden to Jews according to the Hebrew Bible, as the following biblical sources demonstrate:

1) The commandment to believe in G-d's absolute Oneness was given specifically to the children of Israel (the Jewish people), as is stated in the **Shema**, Deuteronomy 6:4, "*Hear O **Israel**, The Lord our G-d, the Lord is One*." The concept expressed in this verse not only refutes the plurality of gods, but also asserts that G-d is the only true existence. Biblically, G-d is not only infinite, but He transcends time, space and matter. G-d has no beginning and no end, as it says in Isaiah 44:6, "*I am the first and I am the last and besides Me there is no other.*" While Judaism believes that G-d manifests Himself to His creation (humanity) in many ways, (i.e. as a judge or a protector) G-d's essence itself is indivisible and therefore without any possibility of distinction. Something that transcends both time and space cannot be described as consisting of three different aspects. The moment we attribute any such distinctions to G-d's essence, we negate His absolute Oneness and unity.*

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* Missionaries are wrong when they argue that the use in Deuteronomy 6:4 of the Hebrew word for *One* (Echad– אחד), rather than the word *unique* (Yachid–יחיד), teaches that G-d is a "composite unity" instead of an "absolute unity." They claim that the Trinity is a composite unity just like a physical object that includes many different individual aspects (eg: one pen, composed of ink, plastic and metal). This reasoning is incorrect, since physical objects that exist within the context of time and space cannot be used to describe G-d who transcends these dimensions. Prior to Creation, G-d was alone and concepts of time, space and the plurality of numbers did not exist. The term *unique* (Yachid– יחיד), correctly describes G-d's existence prior to Creation since it indicates the absence of any plurality, or of rapport with any created object.

The **Shema** utilizes the word "Echad" rather than "Yachid" for the following reason: We live in a physical world created by G-d and perceive finite objects, limited to time and space, that have a rapport with one another. This perception of plurality and the existence of numbers, which is the direct result of the process of Creation, can mistakenly cause us to think that G-d is not the only true existence. The Shema serves to proclaim that G-d is the only true existence despite the apparent contradiction brought about by Creation. To accomplish this, a cardinal number, like "one," is required since it specifies the correct number to the exclusion of all others, as in the verse "*there is '**one**–אחד' not '**two**–שני.'*" (Ecclesiastes 4:8) As finite beings, it would be inappropriate to describe *our* perception of G-d in the world utilizing the word *unique* (Yachid–יחיד), which describes G-d as he transcends time and space. By utilizing "One" in Deuteronomy 6:4, instead of the word "unique," the verse not only affirms the absolute oneness of G-d, it refutes all other perceived possibilities.

The following verses from the Hebrew Bible, when correctly translated, further substantiate this fundamental and crucial Jewish belief in the Oneness of G-d: "*See now that I, even I, am He and there is no god with Me*" (Deuteronomy 32:39) and "*There is nothing else besides G-d*" (Deuteronomy 4:35).

2) Jews are also forbidden to envision that G-d has "*any likeness of anything*." Deuteronomy 4:15-19 and Deuteronomy 5:8-9 are only some of the many biblical references prohibiting Jews from believing that G-d dwells in bodily form, as claimed in the New Testament.*

3) The prohibition against a mediator is found in the Second Commandment, "*You shall have no other gods before Me*." (Exodus 20:3) Therefore, the New Testament statement in John 14:6, that "*No one comes to the Father, but through Me [Jesus]*" is not acceptable to Jews. Even if he or she considers something to be a part of G-d, a Jew is not permitted to use it as a mediator. The Torah teaches that each person is capable of connecting with G-d directly.

These Christian beliefs, which have their roots in ancient paganism, have been the basis for the Jewish rejection of Christianity – even on pain of death – for the last 2,000 years. Historically, Jews have always understood that conversion would mean severing their relationship with G-d as described in the Torah.

CONCLUSIONS

One thing upon which the entire Jewish community and several Christian denominations agree is that "Hebrew Christian" movements are not a part of Judaism. To be a "Jew for Jesus" is as absurd as being a "Christian for Buddha" and as ridiculous as "kosher pork;" it is an obvious contradiction. To paraphrase Elijah,

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* Missionaries incorrectly claim that Genesis chapter 18 indicates that when three men appeared to Abraham, one of them was G-d in bodily form. A careful reading of this chapter, along with chapter 19, clearly indicates that these "men" were really angels. The Bible has many stories of angels taking on human form, and often refers to them with the name of G-d to indicate that they are His exalted messengers. This is similar to the common usage of one of G-d's names as part of the name of a holy individual or place. For example, in Hebrew, Daniel means "G-d is my Judge," Hezekiel means "strength of G-d," and in Jeremiah 33:16, Jerusalem is called "the Lord is my Righteousness."

if you are a follower of Jesus, call yourself a Christian. If you are a Jew, practice Judaism. Don't deceive yourself; you can't be both.

In reality, Judaism is a most beautiful and spiritually fulfilling path to serving G-d with all your heart, soul and might.

The Book of Proverbs 3:17-18 describes the Torah in these words, "*Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and its paths are peace. It is a tree of life to those who lay hold of it*." The best defense against the growing onslaught of missionary propaganda is a deep commitment to Judaism and a thorough understanding of the missionary arguments and the relevant Jewish responses.

THE MESSIAH ACCORDING TO JUDAISM

One of the basic premises upon which Christianity rests is that Jesus was the Messiah predicted in the Jewish Bible. Judaism has always rejected this belief. Since the goal of "Hebrew Christian" missionaries is to convince Jews that Jesus did in fact fulfill the requirements of the promised Messiah, it is necessary to examine the Jewish understanding of the Messiah to understand why such claims are simply not true.

THE HEBREW ROOTS OF THE WORD "MESSIAH"

The Hebrew word for "Messiah" is "Moshiach – משיח." The literal and proper translation of this word is "anointed," which refers to a ritual of anointing and consecrating someone or something with oil. (I Samuel 10:1-2) It is used throughout the Jewish Bible in reference to a wide variety of individuals and objects; for example, a Jewish king (I Kings 1:39), Jewish priests (Leviticus 4:3), prophets (Isaiah 61:1), the Jewish Temple and its utensils (Exodus 40:9-11), unleavened bread (Numbers 6:15), and a non-Jewish king (Cyrus king of Persia, Isaiah 45:1).

THE CRITERIA TO BE FULFILLED BY THE JEWISH MESSIAH

In an accurate translation of the Jewish Scriptures, the word "Moshiach" is never translated as "Messiah," but as "anointed."*

* Some form of the Hebrew word "Moshiach – משיח" is used over 150 times in the Jewish Bible. Christians consistently translate this word as anointed, except in the ninth chapter of Daniel. In this chapter missionaries deviate from this and other correct translations in an attempt to prove that the Messiah came before the destruction of the Second Temple. Rather than speaking about "the Messiah," when read in context and with a correct translation this chapter clearly speaks about two different "anointed" subjects hundreds of years apart: a) The first is the anointed King Cyrus (Isaiah 45:1) who granted permission to the Jews to return and build the Second Temple 52 years "7 weeks of years" after the destruction of the First Temple; b) The second is the anointed priesthood (Leviticus 4:3) that was terminated 434 years "62 weeks of years" later.

Nevertheless, Judaism has always maintained a fundamental belief in a Messianic figure. Since the concept of a Messiah is one that was given by G-d to the Jews, Jewish tradition is best qualified to describe and recognize the expected Messiah. This tradition has its foundation in numerous biblical references, many of which are cited below. Judaism understands the Messiah to be a human being (with no connotation of deity or divinity) who will bring about certain changes in the world and who must fulfill certain specific criteria before being acknowledged as the Messiah.

These specific criteria are as follows:

1) He must be ***Jewish***. (Deuteronomy 17:15, Numbers 24:17)
2) He must be a member of the ***tribe of Judah*** (Genesis 49:10) and a direct male descendent of ***both King David*** (I Chronicles 17:11, Psalm 89:29-38, Jeremiah 33:17, II Samuel 7:12-16) ***and King Solomon.*** (I Chronicles 22:10, II Chronicles 7:18)
3) He must ***gather the Jewish people*** from exile and return them to Israel. (Isaiah 27:12-13, Isaiah 11:12)
4) He must ***rebuild the Jewish Temple*** in Jerusalem. (Micah 4:1)
5) He must bring ***world peace***. (Isaiah 2:4, Isaiah 11:6, Micah 4:3)
6) He must influence ***the entire world to acknowledge and serve one G-d***. (Isaiah 11:9, Isaiah 40:5, Zephaniah 3:9)

All of these criteria for the Messiah are best stated in the book of Ezekiel, Chapter 37:24-28:

> "*And My servant* ***David*** *will be a* ***king*** *over them, and they will all have one shepherd, and they* ***will walk in My ordinances****, and* ***keep My statutes****, and observe them, and they shall* ***live on the land*** *that I gave to Jacob My servant...and I will make a covenant of* ***peace*** *with them; it will be an everlasting covenant and I will set* ***my sanctuary*** *in their midst forever and My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their G-d and they will be My people. And the nations will* ***know that I am the Lord*** *who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.*"

If an individual fails to fulfill even *one* of these conditions, he cannot be the Messiah.

WHY JESUS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN THE JEWISH MESSIAH

A careful analysis of these criteria shows us that, although Jesus was Jewish, he did not fulfill any of the other criteria. An examination of the contradictory accounts of Jesus' genealogy demonstrates a number of difficulties with the fulfillment of the second criterion. Specifically, the New Testament claims that *Jesus did not have a physical father*. The Jewish Scriptures, however, clearly state that a person's genealogy and tribal membership is transmitted exclusively through *one's physical father* (Numbers 1:18, Jeremiah 33:17). Therefore, Jesus cannot possibly be a descendent of the tribe of Judah nor of King David and King Solomon.

There are even further problems with any attempts to use the Jewish Scriptures to prove Jesus' genealogy through Joseph, the husband of Mary (Jesus' mother). For the New Testament claims that Joseph was a descendent of King Jeconiah, who in the Hebrew Bible was cursed to never have a descendent "*sitting on the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah*" (Jeremiah 22:30). Joseph's genealogy, even if it were transmittable to Jesus, would only serve to further disqualify Jesus as the Messiah.

Finally, there is the problem of the contradictory accounts of Jesus' genealogy in Matthew, Chapter 1 and Luke, Chapter 3. The common Christian explanation of this contradiction claims that Luke's genealogy is that of Jesus' mother, Mary. However, this is unfounded, even according to the Greek original. In addition, it has already been established that genealogy is transferred solely through the father, making this attempted explanation completely irrelevant. Even if one *could* trace one's genealogy through one's mother, there would be the additional problem that Luke 3:31 lists Mary as a descendent of David through *Nathan*, Solomon's brother, and not through Solomon himself as required according to the prophesy in I Chronicles 22:10 of the Jewish Bible.

The third, fourth, fifth and sixth criteria have obviously not been fulfilled—neither during Jesus' time nor since. Any Christian claims that these final criteria will be fulfilled in a "Second Coming" are irrelevant because the concept of the Messiah coming twice has no scriptural basis.

To summarize, we cannot know that someone is the Messiah until he fulfills *all* of the above criteria.

The Christian understanding of the Messiah and Jesus differs greatly from the Jewish biblical view. These differences developed as a result of the Church's influence during the time of the Emperor Constantine and the Council of Nicaea that issued the Nicene Creed in 325 CE.

The Messiah was never meant to be an object of worship. His primary mission and accomplishment is to bring world peace and to fill the world with the knowledge and awareness of one G-d.

REFUTING CHRISTIAN "PROOF TEXTS"

While traveling through a forest, a person noticed a circle marked on a tree with an arrow shot perfectly into the center. A few yards away he noticed several more targets, each with arrows in the center. Later, he met the talented archer and he asked him, "How did you become such an expert that you always get your arrows into the center of the bull's-eye?" "It's not difficult," responded the archer, "First I shoot the arrow and then I draw the circle."

When examining Christian "proof texts" that claim to point to Jesus as the promised Messiah, we should always ask the following question. "Has an arrow been shot into a circle or has a circle been drawn around an arrow?" In other words, has the passage been mistranslated, misquoted, taken out of context or fabricated?

Here are examples of several ways that missionaries "draw a circle around the arrow" to prove their point.

Example 1: The Verse Has Been Fabricated and Does Not Exist in the Hebrew Scriptures

The easiest prophecy to fulfill is one you yourself have invented. The New Testament certainly bears witness to this principle, fabricating a number of "prophecies" out of thin air and attributing them to our Hebrew Scriptures.

The New Testament book of Matthew claims that Jesus was the Messiah since he lived in the city of Nazareth. The New Testament utilizes the following "proof text" to make its point: "*He [Jesus] came and resided in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled. 'He shall be called a Nazarene.*'" (Matthew 2:23) Since a Nazarene is a resident of the city of Nazareth and this city did not exist during the time period of the Jewish Bible, it is impossible to find this quotation in the Hebrew Scriptures. It was fabricated out of thin air.

Example 2: THE VERSE IS MISTRANSLATED

An effective missionary will work with crude English retranslations of earlier Greek mistranslations, and will avoid looking at the original Hebrew.

In Romans 11:26, the Christian Bible quotes Isaiah 59:20 as saying, "*The deliverer will come* ***from*** *Zion, he will* ***remove*** *ungodliness from Jacob*," thus attempting to establish scriptural support for the Christian belief that the Messiah will take away our sins. However, a careful examination of the Hebrew original reveals a powerful dilemma. Isaiah 59:20 actually says the opposite: "*A redeemer will come* ***to*** *Zion and to those* ***who turn from*** *transgression in Jacob, declares the Lord*." The Messiah's role is not to take away our sins; rather, when we turn away from our sins, the Messiah will then come! It is also noteworthy that many New Testaments translate this verse correctly in Isaiah and incorrectly in Romans.

Example 3: THE PASSAGE IS MISTRANSLATED *AND* READ OUT OF CONTEXT

In an attempt to prove the concept of the "virgin birth," the book of Matthew 1:22-23 states: "*Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 'Behold a* ***virgin*** *shall be with child and will bear a son and* ***they*** *shall call his name Emmanuel,' which translated means, G-d with us*." Missionaries claim that this is the fulfillment of a prophecy recorded in Isaiah 7:14, that actually reads: "*Behold,* ***the young woman*** *is with child and will bear a son and* ***she*** *will call his name Emmanuel*."

There are numerous inaccuracies in the Christian translation. For example:

1) The Hebrew word, "almah -עלמה," means **a young woman**, not a **virgin**, a fact recognized by biblical scholars*;

* Some missionaries argue that in an ancient translation of the Bible called the "Septuagint," 70 great rabbis translated the word "almah–עלמה" in Isaiah 7:14, as "parthenos–παρθένος," and that this Greek word means a virgin. This claim is false for several reasons: 1) The 70 rabbis did not translate the book of Isaiah, only the "Pentateuch," the five books of Moses. In fact, the introduction to the English edition of the Septuagint states concerning the translation, *"The Pentateuch is considered to be the part the best executed, while the book of Isaiah appears to be the very worst;"* 2) In Genesis 34:2-3 the word "parthenos" is used in reference to a non-virgin, a young woman who had been raped; 3) The entire Septuagint version that missionaries quote from is not the original, but from a later, corrupted version.

2) The verse says "***ha' almah*–העלמה," "***the** young woman*," not **a** young woman, specifying a particular woman that was known to Isaiah during his lifetime; and

3) The verse says "***she** will call his name Emmanuel*," not "***they** shall call*."

Even apart from these inaccuracies, if we read all of Isaiah Chapter 7, from which this verse is taken, it is obvious that Christians have taken this verse out of context.

This chapter speaks of a prophecy made to the Jewish King Ahaz to allay his fears of two invading kings (those of **Damascus** and of **Samaria**) who were preparing to invade Jerusalem, about 600 years before Jesus' birth. Isaiah's point is that these events will take place in the very near future (and not 600 years later, as Christianity claims). Verse 16 makes this abundantly clear: "*For before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken*."

In fact, in the very next chapter this prophecy is fulfilled with the birth of a son to Isaiah. As it says in Isaiah 8:4, "*For before the child shall know to cry, 'My father and my mother' the riches of **Damascus** and the spoils of **Samaria** shall be taken away before the king of Assyria*." This verse entirely rules out any connection to Jesus, who would not be born for 600 years.

Example 4: Viewed in Context, the Verse Could Not Refer to Jesus

In Hebrews 1:5, the New Testament quotes a verse from II Samuel 7:14, "*I will be a Father to him, and he shall be a son to Me*." This is said to be a prophetic reference to Jesus as the son of G-d. However, if we look at this verse from II Samuel in its entirety, the verse doesn't end with the phrase quoted in the New Testament, but continues: "*When he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men*." This cannot possibly fit the Christian Bible's view of a "sinless" Jesus. In addition, the verse is speaking specifically about King Solomon, as is obvious from I Chronicles 22:9-10, "*His name shall be **Solomon** . . . he shall build a house for*

My name and ***I will be a Father to him and he will be a son to Me****.*"

The Bible frequently refers to individuals as G-d's "son." In fact, G-d refers to the entire nation of Israel in the following manner, "*Israel is My* ***son****, My firstborn.*" (Exodus 4:22)

Example 5: THE PASSAGE IS NOT A PROOF

Missionaries incorrectly claim that Jesus fulfilled a prophesy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. They attempt to utilize Michah 5:2 as their proof-text:

> *"But you Bethlehem Ephratah, though you are small among the thousands of Judah, out of you will come to Me one who will be ruler in Israel, whose goings out are from ancient time, from days of old."*

This verse is not a prophesy that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem. The passage simply states it has been preordained that the Messiah would be able to trace his roots back to Bethlehem. This is consistent with the Biblical statement that the Messiah will be a descendant of King David, who was from Bethlehem, as seen in I Samuel 16:18.

There is another problem with this missionary proof text. A major distinction must be made between a scripture that serves as a **proof** that someone is the Messiah and a scriptures that simply states a **requirement** of the Messiah. A proof must be something so exclusive that only one individual can fulfill it. For example: One criterion of the Messiah is that he must be Jewish. If an individual is Jewish, he has fulfilled this particular requirement; however, in and of itself, this is obviously not a proof that the individual is the Messiah since millions of individuals are Jewish and they all meet this criterion. Therefore, the claim that Jesus was born in Bethlehem would not prove a thing, since thousands of children were born there.

SUMMARY

These examples demonstrate the confusion created when missionaries shoot an arrow first and then draw a circle around it. Our advice is to always take the time to examine and read passages carefully and in their entirety. If you follow this advice, the correct interpretation will be abundantly clear.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

QUESTION: Do Jews believe in Heaven and Hell?

ANSWER: Although the Jewish Bible appears to focus primarily on our life and behavior in this world, Judaism definitely believes in Heaven and life after death. The plural form in Genesis 1:26, "*Let **us** form man in **our** image,*" indicates that man has a dual nature—a spiritual soul and a physical body. This is clearly seen in Genesis 2:7, "*G-d formed man **of dust from the ground and breathed** into his nostrils the breath (soul–נשמת) of life and man became a living being.*"

When a person dies the physical body returns to the earth, but the spiritual soul lives on eternally, as it says, "*The dust will return to the earth, as it was, and the spirit will return to G-d who gave it.*" (Ecclesiastes 12:7)

We do not believe in eternal damnation and hell. The Jewish belief is in a purgatory that purifies the soul of its spiritual blemishes prior to its return to G-d. (Psalm 49:15, II Samuel 14:13, Isaiah 45:17)

For a more thorough description of heaven and life after death, see "If You Were G-d" in the suggested reading list.

QUESTION: Do Jews believe in Satan?

ANSWER: In Christian belief, Satan is a fallen angel that has freedom of choice and rebels against G-d. Judaism's view is very different. Isaiah 45:7 and Deuteronomy 13 show that G-d created the temptation to do evil to test our loyalty. That is why the word (Satan–סטן) in Hebrew literally means an adversary (Numbers 22:22) that comes to challenge us. Our mission is to overcome these temptations and do what is correct. The Torah (Genesis 4:7) teaches that this mission is within our ability to fulfill.

QUESTION: Who is the "Servant of G-d" in Isaiah 53?

ANSWER: Missionaries misleadingly assert that the entire chapter 53 of the book of Isaiah refers to Jesus as the "Suffering Servant" of G-d who dies for the sins of the world. Someone could easily be fooled to believe this argument if Isaiah is read out of context and without a proper translation.

However, it is obvious to anyone reading this text correctly, that Isaiah is telling us how the nations of the world will react when they witness the future messianic redemption of the Jewish people.* First, they will be astonished, literally covering their mouths at what they see, because they never believed that they would witness the glorious redemption of a persecuted, rejected and despised Israel. Secondly, they will try to understand why this newly exalted Israel suffered so much. Originally they believed it was because G-d had rejected the Jews. Now that they see that this is not true, they will say that the suffering was the result of the transgressions of the nations who persecuted the Jewish people.**

QUESTION: If Jesus wasn't the Messiah, who was he?

ANSWER: Many historians and theologians agree that the Gospels give a very one-sided picture of Jesus. These scholars disagree with the view that Jesus was G-d and that he did away with the commandments. When the historical, sociological, political and theological circumstances are taken into consideration, they conclude that Jesus was merely a human being whose zealous messianic aspirations failed.

The belief that Jesus was G-d and did away with the commandments was due to the influence of the apostle Paul, and later, the political authority of Constantine and the Roman Empire. They created a religion that Jesus himself would not recognize. It was specifically the dictatorial influence of the Roman Empire that led

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* Throughout the book of Isaiah, the Jewish people are referred to as the "Servant of G-d" and in the singular. (eg: Isaiah 41:8, Isaiah 49:3)

When translated correctly, this can be seen clearly in the following two verses: 1."*He [Israel] was wounded **because of (m'–מ) our [the nations] transgression.*" Isaiah 53:5 In this verse the Hebrew letter מ means "because of" or "from." It is never translated as "for" which would incorrectly indicate a vicarious atonement. 2. "*For the transgression of my people **they** (lamo–למו) were stricken.*" Isaiah 53:8 The word lamo (למו) is plural (see Psalm 99:7) and clearly indicates that this verse does not refer to a single individual.

to the religion's widespread acceptance and popularity. A careful study of the New Testament, which takes into account the prevailing circumstances and the perspectives of the numerous groups that co-existed at the time, also validates this opinion.

Additional substantiation can be brought from the Ebionite Christian sect, who existed as late as the fourth century and who denied the divinity of Jesus and believed they were obligated to keep the Torah. There is evidence that the Ebionites were direct descendants of the original followers of Jesus and were maintaining their original beliefs in a human Messiah. The Ebionites were excommunicated from the Roman church for refusing to accept the non-biblical doctrines put forth in the Nicene Creed.*

QUESTION: How could the Messiah come today if there are no longer kings from the tribe of Judah?

ANSWER: Missionaries often quote Genesis 49:10, "*The scepter will not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh [Messiah] comes.*" They want to prove that the Messiah must have already come, since the kingship of Israel has already departed from the tribe of Judah. This argument is incorrect for two reasons: 1) The passage actually means that the *right* of Kingship will always remain within the tribe of Judah, up to and including when the Messiah comes; 2) If the missionaries' logic was correct, we would be forced to say that the Messiah must have come even before Jesus, since the Kingship of Judah temporarily departed more than 100 years earlier during the time of the Maccabees and the Chanukah miracle.

Missionaries also argue that since all family records were stored exclusively in the Jewish Temple, no one can prove his Jewish genealogy because the Temple and the records were destroyed by the Romans. This argument is totally false. The second chapter of the book of Ezra clearly indicates that private family genealogical records were not kept in the Temple. In fact, there are numerous Jews today who can trace their lineage to the tribe of Judah and King David.

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* The adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire accounts for its growth and popularity. The inclusion of many beliefs taken from Greco-Roman paganism, such as the trinity, resurrection and virgin birth simply facilitated the process.

QUESTION: Why do missionaries claim that the Messiah had to come before the destruction of the Second Temple?

ANSWER: Missionaries incorrectly claim that the passage, "*The glory of this latter Temple will be greater than the first,*" (Haggai 2:9) proves that the Messiah must come during the time of the Second Temple. They argue that, despite the fact that it was physically greater, there was no apparent demonstration that the "glory" of the Second Temple was greater. Their circular logic assumes that the Jews missed something, and the missionaries' presumption is that the "glory" was the Messiah and that this could only have been Jesus.

Missionaries incorrectly quote rabbinic sources in an attempt to validate their claim that the Messiah definitely came before the destruction of the Second Temple. These rabbinic sources do not say the Messiah would **definitely** come **before** the destruction. What they do say is that the **potential** for his coming materialized **at the moment** of the destruction of the Temple. This is the same as the concept that a cure is provided at the onset of an illness.

The meaning of the statement that "*The glory of the latter Temple will be greater than the first*" must be understood from the Torah perspective, which focuses on the ultimate purpose of creation and exile. The goal of creation is that G-dliness will be openly revealed even in the most mundane places and circumstances, as it says in Isaiah 11:9, "*The earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as waters cover the sea,*" and Isaiah 40:5, "*The glory of G-d will be revealed, and all flesh together will see that the mouth of G-d has spoken.*" This corresponds with the correct meaning of the rabbinic teaching that the "glory" of the Second Temple surpassed the First Temple in that it was physically larger, more beautiful and stood for a longer period of time. This principle indicates that more of the physical world* was involved in revealing G-d's glory during the time of the Second Temple. After its destruction this process continues throughout the subsequent exile.

Exile serves not only to rectify our transgressions, it also facilitates our mission to reveal G-dliness in the entire world. We learn

* The Hebrew word for "world" is "olam–עולם" and is related to the Hebrew "helem–העלם" which means concealed. This connotes how the physical world conceals the G-dliness that permeates it. Our mission is to reveal this G-dliness by utilizing the world to serve G-d, thereby revealing the true advantage of light over darkness. (Ecclesiastes 2:13)

in Vayikra Rabbah 13:5 and Micah 7:15, that the Egyptian exile serves as the paradigm for all subsequent exiles. Beyond the simple meaning, the original exile contained a deeper purpose. Joseph proclaimed this in Genesis 45:7-8 by saying that G-d had a positive purpose for exiling him. In addition, G-d told Abraham in Genesis 15:13 that the Egyptian exile would affect the elevation of the material wealth of the land.

So too, all subsequent exiles have more than one purpose. In addition to exile being a method of atonement for transgression, it also serves as a means to utilize the entire physical world to proclaim and reveal G-d's presence.

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO THE CULT AND MISSIONARY PROBLEM

The following questions and corresponding answers provide concrete recommendations as to how to prevent missionaries from converting Jews and how to counter missionary attempts which may have met with some success.

QUESTION: Is there anything that Jews can do to "immunize" themselves and their families against evangelists and cult recruiters?

ANSWER: As with so many facets of life, prevention begins at home. A Jewish home should *feel* Jewish. Parents can set the tone through their own positive example: by learning about Judaism and by observing and understanding its customs and traditions in ways with which they themselves are comfortable. A formal Jewish education is necessary. Parents who cannot adequately answer the questions every child asks about religion may unintentionally convey to their youngsters the impression that such knowledge isn't particularly important.

It is dangerous to give a child the impression that Judaism is a religion of convenience that allows one to pick and choose one's observances. This may leave the child with an impression that there are no consequences for his or her religious actions and that Judaism is both hypocritical and void of spiritual content.

Children model themselves after their parents, mirroring their behavior and, frequently, their attitudes. A parent whose conduct seems to proclaim, "*Do as I say, not as I do,*" is inevitably placing his or her child at a disadvantage.

Parents must maintain an open channel of communication with their children, whether their sons or daughters are in elementary school, high school or college, living on their own, or married. Ideally, children should be able to discuss any issue with their parents. Establishing such a venue for communication during children's formative years will go a long way toward guaranteeing a lifetime of non-judgmental dialogue with which to address the difficult situations they may confront.

It is equally critical that parents both verbalize and demonstrate their love for their children. I've counseled too many Jews who have remarked, *"My folks never cared about me anyway; why are they bothering me now?"*

QUESTION: How can a parent know whether his son or daughter is at risk or under a missionary's influence?

ANSWER: Parents might discover pamphlets, New Testament tracts, jewelry representing a particular group, or the Bible of a different faith. Sometimes the son or daughter will give verbal clues, like, "*We need to be saved*" or "*I'm getting salvation so I won't go to hell*." Or the child may open a discussion by saying, "*Did you know that the 'New Testament' (or another book) says such and such?*"

Just as parental intuition can detect the onset of a physical illness before medical symptoms appear, it can frequently detect a spiritual malady.

At times, the clue will be deeply buried between the lines: "*Why doesn't Judaism teach about life after death, or about heaven and hell?*" Here, parents must not only hear the embedded message, they must also be capable of giving an effective answer.

When incapable or unsure of how to deal effectively with a conflict over religion, parents may wish to discuss the problem with a rabbi. This is probably the best course to pursue when confronted by a child with questions like, "*How do we know that Judaism is the 'true' religion?*" However, keep in mind that not all rabbis are experienced in dealing with the particular issues related to a cult or missionary problem. It is therefore advisable to turn to experts in this field, such as the specially trained staff of **Jews for Judaism**, who travel throughout the world providing successful counseling services.

QUESTION: But won't the person asking the question be insulted or feel "put down" by constant rebuttals that only emphasize Judaism?

ANSWER: Possibly. Remember, though, that almost everyone wants to believe the logical answers to legitimate questions. When communication is open and honest, everyone can make informed, educated decisions. The decision to join a cult or to otherwise convert isn't made overnight or on the basis of a single answer.

QUESTION: What happens if all these preventive measures are too late, and the son or daughter joins a cult or church?

ANSWER: The important thing is not to panic, explode, accuse, say "Kaddish" or otherwise provoke the person into avoidance of you or of the issue. A calm demeanor, coupled with the open channels of communication mentioned earlier, will often facilitate the start of dialogue. Dialogue is the first step we take in attempting to persuade a person to reconsider his or her new religion or cult.

If parents or other significant family members *actively* listen, the "convert" may be more than willing to discuss his or her motivation and reasoning. Such a discussion with **Jews for Judaism**'s specially trained counselors and rabbis may allow a point-by-point discussion of the new faith's merits, which will demonstrate how and why Judaism presents a better alternative for Jews.

QUESTION: But what if the family recoils in anger and shame? What if family members "disown" the convert?

ANSWER: If confrontation occurs, dialogue will be difficult or impossible. Creating an argument will most likely polarize the two parties, fostering an atmosphere hostile to constructive exchanges of feelings and beliefs. One must realize that the convert's new beliefs are as real and "true" to him as one's own are dear to oneself. A blunt "you're wrong" may be interpreted as intellectually insulting.

QUESTION: What is the proper approach for the family?

ANSWER: Family members should do whatever they can to convince the individual to consider all sides of the issue and seek external support services. Just as people consider all options when choosing a career, a spouse, or where to live, they should at least discuss the options provided by Judaism as opposed to the cult or any other religion he or she may have adopted. The individual will have to "open up" before family members or professionals can begin to achieve any success.

QUESTION: Does that mean that the family has to tolerate the trappings and ceremonies of another faith in their home?

ANSWER: No. If, in order to avoid confrontation, the family tolerates the person's decision to change religion, that person should

also respect the family's wishes. The alien religion should be practiced in the appropriate place, whether a church, ashram, or the person's separate apartment. This arrangement also facilitates a more open atmosphere, more conducive to a willingness on the part of the individual and his or her family to meet with a trained professional.

It is important to respect each person's right to an honest mistake. Our goal is to carefully help him or her realize that the decision to adopt another faith is, both intellectually and emotionally, an honest mistake. We accomplish that goal in part by showing these people what Judaism is all about, rather than by merely disproving or rejecting his or her new philosophy.

QUESTION: What if none of this works? Is that person lost to Judaism forever?

ANSWER: Absolutely not. Those of us in the field can tell you hundreds of stories about people who spent years in Christianity or a cult, only to return to Judaism. That's why it's important to maintain an open channel of communication and to set a good religious example. Family will almost always remain family; differences in belief and faith do not change a *lifelong* biological and emotional relationship. One should never stop hoping that the individual will return.

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS
(NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO ENSURE PRIVACY)

LISA'S STORY

Recently my twin sons celebrated their bar mitzvah. It's hard to believe that not long ago they were attending a youth group where they learned how to talk to their Jewish friends about Jesus in hopes of converting them to Christianity. My children and I were devout born-again Christians.

Let me share our story with you. I was born Jewish, but I became a Christian nine years ago during a time in my life when I was searching for G-d. My sons and I joined an Assembly of God church and I put them in a Christian day school. I was completely immersed in Christianity, "filled with the Spirit" and speaking in tongues. We attended Sunday school and church every week, I sang in the church choir and my sons performed in church plays every Christmas and Easter.

G-d works in wondrous ways. Things started happening that started me on the road back to Judaism.

Last September, my family began attending a "Messianic Synagogue." This is a church that uses Jewish symbols and prayers as part of their worship.

Growing up, I had no positive Jewish memories. I was one of the only Jews in town. Being Jewish meant everyone got a Christmas tree but me. I never knew many Jewish people, and I was Jewishly illiterate. I didn't realize what a rich heritage I came from and what treasures were mine. I thought I was finding this with the Messianics.

That same month, I bought my first home in Southern California. My sons started 4th grade in the excellent public schools there. For the first time, they had Jewish children in their classrooms. My sons were curious about what being Jewish meant.

I was starving to learn more about Judaism. Via the Internet I started learning and discussing religious issues with other Messianic Jews.

In February, I went to a Jewish gathering and festival and checked out all the Jewish booths. I started talking to this older Jewish man with a yarmulke. He asked me where I go to shul. When I told him the Messianic Fellowship down the street, he freaked out and started yelling. People started staring! For many hours we argued about Messiah and the bible.

Unknown to me, this man contacted Rabbi Kravitz of Jews for Judaism and told him how he had shouted at a Jewish woman. He was turning to the rabbi for advice. Rabbi Kravitz suggested he contact me and apologize for his behavior and invite us for Shabbos. Rabbi Kravitz also suggested that at some point down the road we could be introduced to him. A few days later the man from the Jewish festival called and invited my sons and me to his home. This Jewish family became our friends and showed us the beauty and holiness of Judaism.

We loved everything we were learning about our people, traditions and Jewish culture; however, we were still committed Christians. I was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah and G-d, and I had 9 years of Christian bible study to back it up!

I wanted the truth and my friend told me, "*You're a Jew! Learn the Bible from Jews!*" The time had come for me to contact Rabbi Kravitz. I was impressed that he spent three hours talking to me on the phone. He was the only Jewish person I spoke with who gave me thoughtful answers. He gave me so much to think about.

We spoke several times on the phone and eventually arranged for a meeting at my home. I was a bit disappointed to see that he came empty handed. After talking awhile, we went to retrieve several books from his car. Then we rolled up our sleeves and got busy! He spent the entire day at my home talking to me and my sons. He brought several versions of the Bible and we went through them line-by-line. He had answers to *all* my questions!

Rabbi Kravitz also gave me the 12-tape **Jews for Judaism** seminar and workbook. I listened and studied and was pleased that this strengthened Rabbi Kravitz's arguments.

I stopped attending church. I gave away my Christian books, music, crosses, videos and decorations. Now I have Jewish art, books, mezzuzas, and Judaica in my home, and my sons have Hebrew names.

The **Jews for Judaism** organization helped me make a solid, well-educated decision regarding my Jewish beliefs about G-d. Once I was open to hearing the Jewish perspective, I very quickly got answers to the truth I was seeking. No one else I ever spoke with was qualified to answer my questions and undo my Christian beliefs.

I now realize the importance of claiming our Jewish identities. My sons and I plan on marrying in the Jewish faith and raising Jewish families educated in Jewish beliefs and values.

I want to thank everyone at **Jews for Judaism**. You made **Jews for Judaism** a reality through your support and commitment. You saved my family and brought us back to Judaism.

JERRY'S STORY

I was raised in a Conservative Jewish home and my parents were Holocaust survivors. As a child, I attended Hebrew school and observed the holiday traditions. I always felt proud of being Jewish, especially after visiting Israel.

Following high school, I attended a major university in Southern California, majoring in engineering. During my years at the university, I came into contact with a number of "born again Christians." It was my acquaintance and subsequent study with them that led me to become a "born again Christian." I experienced a real personal relationship with G-d. I was very involved for over four years. I read the Bible every night and attended a fundamentalist church called Calvary Chapel at least twice a week. As I grew in my faith, I started influencing others and even ran my own Bible study group. Since I lived on campus, I joined an organization called Campus Crusade for Christ. I became very involved in that group, attending Leadership Training classes and "action group" meetings. Eventually, I ran my own "action group." I also appeared on Christian radio and television programs, and even in two Christian movies. I considered myself not only a "born again Christian," but a "completed Jew."

One day, our entire advanced action group went to hear a rabbi from "**Jews for Judaism**" lecture about Christianity. The sincerity, commitment and wealth of knowledge of this rabbi impressed us all. But, since we knew that we had the "truth," we challenged him

on numerous theological points. To my amazement, he was able to answer every one. After the lecture, I decided that I would stay and continue talking with this rabbi. We spoke all night, finishing at 4:00 A.M. The rabbi was so dedicated that he missed his plane in order to talk with me!

I began to realize that even with my Jewish background I still had a very limited understanding of what it meant to be a Jew. My acceptance of Jesus had been a very one-sided decision. I knew so much of the Christian perspective but relatively little of the Jewish viewpoint. As a Christian, I had been very dogmatic; my attitude was, “I’ll listen to what you have to say, but I know that I’m right.” My encounter with this rabbi made me realize that there are two sides to every story.

I started to study and check things out. Christians would ask me, “Do you think the devil’s got a little hold on you?” I would reply that I was only doing what Jesus said: “Ask and ye shall receive” and “Seek diligently and ye shall find.” I prayed for guidance, and others prayed with me that I be led on the right path. My course of inquiry turned up countless “proof texts” from the Christian Bible which were based upon mistranslations or which had been taken out of context. The more deeply I searched, the more apparent it became to me that I had made a mistake.

At the same time, another part of me was demanding, “What about all the changes in my life, the miracles I had seen, the gifts of the ‘Holy Spirit’?” How was I to ignore all of this? I eventually realized that all of these experiences were not unique to Christianity, but that they happen to people in other religions as well. People’s lives have been changed within the realm of Judaism; Christians hardly have a monopoly on G-d!

I am now practicing Judaism in its proper and spiritual way, and feel much closer to G-d than ever before. I know now what it means to be a Jew. It is important to use the mind that G-d gave me, and to follow His word as He intended it.

I can’t see how anyone who would really understand Judaism could ever believe in Jesus; there’s just no room for Jesus in the Jewish picture.

The Bible warns against following after the desires of your heart. Remember that most Jewish people don’t understand the

Bible well enough to make an informed decision. We owe it to ourselves and to G-d to check it out, and to make sure that we are not following something which is untrue. Now I truly am a fulfilled Jew — a link in an unbroken chain that goes back to Moses and Abraham.

LAURA'S STORY

Although born Jewish, I was active in Bible studies with Baptist and other evangelical churches for over three years, and went to Christian camps during my summers. For a long time, I was actively involved with Jews for Jesus, handing out tracts (leaflets), attending "Messianic" retreats and Bible study courses. I felt more comfortable studying with other Jews who also believed in Jesus, or Yeshua, as we called him. Most of the people involved with Jews for Jesus had the same limited Jewish background as I, and like me were dissatisfied with their previous experiences of Judaism. But now we considered ourselves "completed Jews." At Bible study sessions, we studied both the "New" and "Old" Testaments. Using the "Old" to prove that Jesus was indeed the prophesied Messiah, I was very content with my relationship with "the Lord" and with my involvement in Jews for Jesus.

One day, I handed out a tract to a religious Jewish woman and told her about the spiritual completeness and close relationship one can have with G-d through belief in Yeshua (Jesus). I showed her many passages in the "Old" and "New" Testaments, as she listened to my enthusiastic "witness." After I finished, she asked me some basic questions about Jewish holidays and prayers. Her questions caught me off guard. I felt flustered and ashamed that I didn't know the answers. In my frustration, I asked her if she felt that she had a personal relationship with G-d, something I knew I didn't feel growing up as a Jew. "Yes," she said, "why don't you come over to my home for Shabbat and decide for yourself whether we Jews have a relationship with G-d?" She gave me her number and left.

Her many questions pounded in my head. Why didn't I know about those holidays? Had I really given Judaism a chance? I had never met a religiously committed Jew before, and had thought they existed only in books. My "Hebrew Christian" friends tried to dis-

suade me from calling this woman. But I felt that, if I really believed in Jesus, I would see that her spirituality was false. I didn't think anything could get in the way of my relationship with Jesus.

I went to the home of those observant Jews and was overwhelmed by the beauty of Shabbat. It seemed that everything they did was related to G-d. From the blessing of the children to the flickering of the Havdalah candle, there was something holy about their Jewish lifestyle. I felt oppressed by my ignorance, and wanted to know more. I prayed to Jesus to show me the way, but in time my commitment began to change. I realized that I didn't need an intermediary to relate to G-d.

The more I studied the Torah's views of the relationship between man and G-d, the more I realized that the Trinity could not be a biblical concept and the more I felt allied with traditional Judaism. While studying the Torah in Hebrew, I discovered numerous mistranslations in the Christian text. Slowly, I returned home to my people.

Through my intense study, I learned the deeper meanings of the Jewish concepts of G-d, commandments, devotion and prayer. The spirituality that I had longed for in my youth was in my own backyard the whole time.

I am married now, and my husband and I have dedicated our lives to G-d and to the Torah. Our children won't need to ask the question I was forced to ask myself: "Did I really give Judaism a chance?"

RACHEL'S STORY

I was born and raised in Tel Aviv, Israel, and had the best education possible. I am fluent in Hebrew and English and knowledgeable about Jewish and Israeli life as well as the Bible stories.

When I moved to America at age 20, numerous Christians befriended me and talked to me about Jesus. I studied their Bible with them on a regular basis and eventually became a "born-again Christian." I joined a "Messianic synagogue" and for over five years I considered myself a better Jew than before; I was now a "Messianic Jew."

American Jews were always surprised to meet an Israeli who had accepted Christianity, and I used these encounters to share my faith with them. One individual challenged me to meet with Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz of **Jews for Judaism**. My fluency in Hebrew assured me that he couldn't put anything over on me.

Our first meeting lasted for seven hours. We examined all the biblical passages in the Hebrew original, since prior to this, my "born-again" friends and I had studied the Bible in English. I discovered that the English translations which I had used were based upon mistranslations and distortions.

I spent Shabbat with Rabbi Kravitz and his family on many occasions, exploring basic concepts of religion, morality and G-d. My close association with these religiously committed Jews made a tremendous impression upon me. I noted the truth in their commitment, their sincerity and closeness to G-d, something that I had never been exposed to in secular Israeli society. In fact, it was something which I had never wanted to approach. However, because the facts were so convincing, I continued my exploration of Judaism and eventually realized that I had made a big mistake in accepting Christianity.

I returned to Judaism, and this time it has changed my life. I am now delighted with my commitment to Judaism and my belief in one G-d.

SUGGESTED READING

1) Baigent, Michael and Leigh, Richard. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception*. New York: Touchstone, 1991.

2) Berger, David, and Wyschograd, Michael. *Jews and Jewish Christianity*. New York: Ktav, 1978.

3) Bleich, David J. *With Perfect Faith*. New York: Ktav, 1983.

   Excellent work on the Thirteen Foundations of Jewish faith.

4) Clorfene, Chaim and Rogalsky, Yakov. *The Path of the Righteous Gentile*. Southfield, MI: Targun Press, 1987.

   An in-depth and practical analysis of the Seven Laws of the Children of Noah, the moral standards for the non-Jewish world.

5) Conway, Flo, and Siegelman, Jim. *Holy Terror*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1982.

6) Hay, Malcolm. *The Roots of Christian Anti-Semitism*. New York: Freedom Library Press, 1981.

7) Kaplan, Aryeh. *If You Were G-d*. New York: NCSY/Orthodox Union, 1983.

8) Kaplan, Aryeh. *The Infinite Light*. New York: NCSY/Orthodox Union, 1981.

9) Kaplan, Aryeh. *The Real Messiah*. New York: NCSY/Orthodox Union, 1976.

   An excellent overview of the missionary phenomenon. Though not a comprehensive work, this book is a good starter for those desiring to understand the issues involved.

10) Maccoby, Hyam. *The Mythmaker - Paul and the Invention of Christianity*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986.

11) Prager, Dennis and Telushkin, Joseph. *Why The Jews*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983.

An excellent overview of the reasons for anti-Semitism.

12) Sargant, William. *Battle for the Mind*. Baltimore, MD: ISHK/Malor, rev 1997.

13) Sigal, Gerald. *The Jew and the Christian Missionary, A Jewish Response to Missionary Christianity*. New York: Ktav, 1981.

The approach and material in Sigal's book make it one of the best source books for anti-missionary training. The scholarship contained in these pages is worth mastering.

14) Twerski, Abraham. *Living Each Day.* New York: Mesorah, 1988.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM RESOURCE CENTER

Jews for Judaism has numerous resources available to the public. We offer a wide variety of books – and audio and video tapes – that can be obtained at excellent prices. One of these outstanding resources is our highly acclaimed **12-part audio series "The Counter-Missionary Seminar."** You can obtain these materials by contacting your local **Jews for Judaism** office or by accessing the Resource Catalogue on our website at *www.jewsforjudaism.org*.

Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz and the other members of **Jews for Judaism**'s Speakers Bureau are available to give dynamic presentations to your organization. These informative and entertaining programs have inspired tens of thousands of individuals and have received rave reviews from all segments of the Jewish community. Please contact us to arrange one of the following programs or to plan a program specific to your needs:

THE BATTLE FOR THE JEWISH SOUL: The Missionary Threat to the Jewish Community

MISSIONARY IMPOSSIBLE: The Jewish Response to Missionaries

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CONFESSIONS OF A FORMER JEW FOR JESUS: Personal Account by a Former Member

These programs have met with great success at congregations and organizations in all segments of Jewish life, as attested by the following:

“Thank you for the outstanding, thought-provoking, educational programs that you presented. I hope that **Jews for Judaism** will continue to be successful through your educational programs, in combating the groups that threaten us.”

— Arlynne Bochnek
Director, Central Region – United Synagogue Youth

“Your presentation helped our UAHC members feel that they are not alone in the struggle and that they have someone to turn to with real expertise. ...I was especially grateful for your sensitivity and respectfulness in dealing with the needs of the Reform Jewish community.”

— Rabbi Alice Dubinsky
Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Los Angeles

“Your presentation was not only substantive and entertaining, but held the teens in attendance riveted in their seats. Aside from your extensive rabbinic knowledge, your diverse experience in scuba diving, skiing and martial arts was most impressive and engaging for the kids.”

— Rabbi Daniel Lerner
West Coast NCSY

“It was a real success convening over 250 people from our diverse organized Jewish community... your sensitivity and dynamic energy helped clarify the many complex issues and consequences when Judaism and Christianity are disrespectfully misrepresented.”

— Debra Laskow
The Jewish Federation, West Hills, CA

“We certainly appreciate the expertise and insights you brought... **Jews for Judaism** has definitely left a lasting impact on the Jewish community of Dallas.”

— Larry S. Robbins, Director
Jewish Community Relations Council, Dallas, TX

Jews for Judaism offers specialized counseling services to individuals, and to friends and families of individuals, who have been affected by evangelical Christian missionaries and cult groups. We

help individuals cope with the anguish and frustration associated with the loss of a loved one to these deceptive groups (see Personal Accounts), and we also work to reunite family members and strengthen family relationships.

Community leaders and rabbis from every segment of the Jewish community regularly make referrals to, and request assistance from, **Jews for Judaism**. They know that our highly dedicated counselors have successfully helped hundreds of people discover the beauty and spirituality of Judaism. For a confidential consultation, contact any **Jews for Judaism** office listed on the back of this booklet.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz, Founder of **Jews for Judaism** International

Bentzion Kravitz, an acknowledged authority on Judaism and Christian polemics, is the founder of **Jews for Judaism** International, and Executive Director of its Los Angeles branch.

Born in 1954 in New York, Rabbi Kravitz studied at the University of Texas in Austin, majoring in communications, and earned his degree from the Rabbinical College of America.

A renowned lecturer, Rabbi Kravitz has appeared on both television and radio and has lectured extensively throughout the United States, the former Soviet Union, South Africa, Australia and Israel. With over 25 years of experience, he has one of the highest success rates in the Jewish community for counseling Jews involved in cults and missionary groups.

Rabbi Kravitz is also a Chaplain for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. His hobbies include skiing, scuba diving and martial arts. He and his wife Dvora, a licensed therapist, reside in Los Angeles and are the parents of six children.

This clear, concise and easy-to-read handbook is made available to you through **Jews for Judaism,** the only full-time counter-missionary resource and outreach organization spanning the world. **Jews for Judaism**'s Crisis Intervention Centers promote Jewish continuity by confronting assimilation and by counteracting deceptive Christian missionary efforts directed toward Jews.

This booklet is an excellent resource for rabbis, educators, parents, students and young adults. The information it provides is both educational and effective. It is a superb inoculation against missionary efforts.

If **Jews for Judaism** can be of service to you or anyone that you know, please contact us at:

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